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THE UNITARIAN

A MAGAZINE FOR FREE CHRISTIANS

RONNIE CLARE

By Peter Short.

Last year's Youth Service at Mill Street Domestic Mission at Liverpool marked a minor turning point in the life of Ronnie Clare, secretary of the Mill Street U.Y.P.L. Branch. At this Service an interview was substituted for the address in which Rev. Eric Lord, a Congregational minister, was subjected to a barrage of questions from the U.Y.P.L. led by George Howarth and Ronnie. Eric Lord has appeared on television a number of times and was so impressed with Ronnie's approach that he submitted his name to the producer of "Sunday Break," an ITV programme.

Since then Ronnie has appeared on television in eight lively programmes where teenagers have been in discussion with guest personalities. Among the men who have appeared as guests are Alun Owen, the playwright; the Bishop of Coventry; Humphrey Lyttleton; Rev. Donald Carpenter and an American minister touring England. The most enjoyable programme for Ronnie was one which was filmed in London in which he and another Liverpool boy interviewed the Rev. Donald Soper for twenty-five minutes.

We don't know when Ronnie will appear again but we will watch out for him. When we see him on the screen we will wonder what he is like at home. Here are a few details to help.

The twenty-year-old son of a Liverpool baker, Ronnie has a brother and a sister both slightly younger than himself. He has been going to a Unitarian Church and Sunday School for fifteen years, but says he does not claim to be a Unitarian or even to have any deep religious beliefs. "I believe basically that there is a God," he says, "but I'm still a mixed up kid as far as religion goes. I'm still trying to find out the truth about Christianity as a way of living by attending a Unitarian Church."

Ronnie is often to be found helping around the various clubs at the Domestic Mission. He is secretary of the U.Y.P.L. Branch, and his favourite activities include dancing and playing the guitar. He is too active to do much reading, but he enjoys the occasional crime story, and for music he likes only traditional jazz and a bit of light classical. Two of Ronnie's chief interests are his girl-friend and his 350 c.c. Norton motor-bike. They both command his attention, but in his spare time he works as a G.P.O. Telephones engineer and goes to night-school three times a week.

Until we met Ronnie, we thought the U.Y.P.L. "Balanced Youth Programme" was for the Branches. It seems to apply to some individuals.

UNITARIANS IN THE NEWS

A concert at the Festival Hall, London, in January was given "as a tribute to services rendered to music with knowledge, devotion and modesty, by Sir Adrian Boult." Previous to this occasion a presentation had been made to Sir Adrian by Yehudi Menuhin.

The Rev. Reginald Sorenson, M.P., is chairman of a committee that has been formed to organise a number of events in the first week in May marking the centenary of the birth of Rabindranath Tagore. President is Mrs. Pandit and Patron the Prime Minister. It is planned that there should be a number of fund-raising events, with a target of at least £20,000, the money to be used to translate Tagore's works and provide lectureships and fellowships.

Andrew Rogers, a Sheffield Unitarian, was organiser of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's Youth "Coast-to-Coast" March over Christmas.

Sigrid Dunkley is the new secretary of Buxton's War on Want Action Group which is aiding agricultural and leprosy work in South India.

THE U.Y.P.L. DRAMA FESTIVAL

The drama festival is being held this year at Liverpool. Entries have been received from places as far afield as Edinburgh, Swansea and London. Due to the large number, the festival will be held on two Saturdays, March 18th and March 25th. Present holder of the shield is Swinton U.Y.P.L.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

"In case you find a mistake in this paper, please consider that it was there for a purpose. We publish something for everyone, and some folks are always looking for mistakes."

A quotation from a Canadian paper requoted in the "Vancouver Unitarian."

T.Y.U. EDITOR ATTACKS "DOGMATIC ANGLICAN TYPES"

The following extract is taken from the January issue of the Young Unitarian, monthly newssheet of the U.Y.P.L.

"An official U.Y.P.L. Regional-Review Christmas Card—"With Best Wishes from the Editor"—contained this verse: 'Thrice Holy be Thy Name, Sweet Child of Bethlehem's manger, Who left Thy throne of light and came to earth, a stranger. To Thee all praise and glory be, From hearts who truly worship Thee.' It depends how much weight we place upon religious sincerity at Christmas-time as to whether we shrug this kind of thing off with a laugh or consider that it could lead to disharmony in at least one section of our League.

"There is plenty of room in U.Y.P.L. for young people with a diversity of outlooks, but surely they must all be basically liberal. The group of young dogmatic-Anglican-type people, members of which we see as lay preachers or who worm their way into U.Y.P.L. Regional or Branch Office constitute a real danger to our League. They are reversing against the main stream of Unitarian thought and they should no longer be taken for granted or ignored.

And yet, this may be too serious an attack—maybe all they need is a copy of a little booklet called "What Unitarians Believe." Some of them would probably be rather surprised if they read it!" N.A.K.

(In conversation with an Editor of a Regional Review who had sent Christmas cards it was revealed that he had read "What Unitarians Believe," and that he never read the words on the Christmas cards he sent! *Editor*).

WHATSOEVER A MAN SOWS

by J. Martin Hall.

A fitting thought to ponder in March, the month when farmers invest their capital of seed in the earth, is found in Galatians, 6 v. 7., "Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap." If our aim is poor, the outcome will be poor. If our aim is good, the outcome will be good. Hymn 367 (Hymns of Worship) puts it this way,

"Sow truth, if thou the true wouldst reap;
Who sows the false shall reap the vain."

Jesus asks: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" It all comes to this: What we ask for in this life, be it high or be it low, we get!

I wonder if that is so!

Look at it in this way.

About sowing there are two forces (they both begin with C!) which we ought to bear in mind: Courage and Chance. Chance certainly plays a part. Not only is it true, as Jesus said, "Some seed fell by the wayside," but we know wind and weather take a hand, and there are different grades of seed in the hopper as well! Chance certainly plays a part.

But still more does the other force too. Courage is there as well. ("Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.") In the seed's life-and-death grip with its element there is the courage of battle and from that act of creative courage spring forth the myriad blades of shining wheat that arm the plain. Chance blows about all our lives too, but to the degree that we wrestle in the spiritual element in which we are destined to live, we get satisfaction and joy and success. It makes a great difference whether chance or creative courage plays the preponderant part in our lives.

In sailing long ago it was highly dangerous to steer for the open sea and so men chose when sailing to hug the coast. Then a third important C was found. This was the Compass. With this put in the midst of the ship, men could sail difficult seas unafraid. And if Courage is put there firmly in the midst of our lives we shall have the means of finding our content.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

The Playing Fields of ...

Raymond clumped into the room with his arms full of football kit.

"Where's mi football boots, Mum?" he asked.

"Where are my football boots, please?" corrected Mother, patiently.

"Sorry, Mum," replied Raymond.

"Raymond, why do we have to keep reminding you of these things? You never seem to think. Or perhaps your mind dwells on other things?"

"Yes, Mum. I think you're right."

"Football, for instance?"

"Yes, well, there are always things cropping up which require one's undivided attention," quoth Raymond, standing on his dignity.

"Such as . . .?"

"Well, those playing-fields, for instance. Do you know there's not a hut anywhere where we can change or any water to wash with afterwards?" The idea of Raymond bothering about water for washing amused his mother, but she asked: "Why do you want a hut to change? There won't be anybody to see you who shouldn't. The fields are quite isolated."

"Yes, they are; and they're wide-open, too. Have you noticed the icy winds we're getting? They roar round the pitch until we're perished."

"But you get warm playing don't you?"

"And what about the rain and snow?" Raymond went on.

Mother saw his point and off he went. He returned later in the after-

noon dirty, disgruntled and "starved through."

Father was home and came out of the kitchen.

"Had a good game Raymond?" he said.

"Not bad, Dad; but we'll have to get a hut. It's not fair."

"Well, now, suppose I tell you that you'll see one next week?"

"What d'you mean, Dad?"

"I mean that you'll be getting these facilities you keep groaning about. The Parents Teachers' Association is doing it. We've had it in hand for some time and the school is very pleased. So somebody **does** think of you all now and again."

"But, Dad, I wasn't blaming you or anybody in particular . . ."

"I know, Raymond. Don't worry; it was a fair complaint. The huts are needed, especially in this weather, so, from next week, it will be as you all want it."

"OOh, smashing, Dad. Thanks."

AS I SEE IT

By H.J.

Punctuality is a virtue worth cultivating when we are young. There is nothing more upsetting than people who arrive late at Church and take their place in the pew during the service. It is equally annoying to the chairman and other members of the committee if we arrive late at a meeting. All through life, in the office or workshop, the theatre, the party or the annual picnic it is better to arrive a little before the appointed time. Let us dismiss the foolish notion that it is polite to be a little late when we are invited out socially. The time has been fixed by our host and it is ill mannered to be deliberately late as many are. People who say "Better late than never" would not use a level crossing after the gates were closed.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

"The Way of Prayer," a manual of daily prayers and reading: The Lindsey Press, 2s.

This is a long overdue reprint of a booklet that first appeared in 1940. Its purpose, as stated by its compilers, is "to quicken and deepen the spiritual life of all who use it, and to draw into an increasing Fellowship of Spirit the members of the Unitarian and Free Christian churches and thus strengthen their sense of spiritual unity."

The book contains a theme for each day for a month. Verse, quotation, reading, prayer and hymn all bear on the theme.

"The Way of Prayer" is valuable not only for the daily prayers and readings, but for its wise introduction of 'brief hints,' and list of further useful books and collections of prayers. One omission, however, from the list of collections of prayers is the late Dr. R. W. Wilde's book of meditation and prayer "Vision, Work and Service." This was published in 1940 also, and is perhaps now out of print.

R.E.Y.D WORKS SUB-COMMITTEE

The Rev. David C. Doel has been made secretary of the Works Sub-Committee of the R.E.Y.D., which meets from time to time at Cross Street. It is concerned with providing the R.E.Y.D. with material for use in Sunday Schools and with the organisation of activities which will promote the health of Sunday Schools and Sunday School Unions throughout the country. Its latest scheme is the organisation of a panel of speakers and Sunday School visitors and experts in various aspects of Sunday School work to respond to appeals for help from Sunday Schools and Unions who are in difficulties.

N.S.S.F. PERSONALITIES, 1961

Mr. Albert Hibbert, F.C.I.I., (pictured above) will be installed as President of the Northern Sunday School Federation at the 116th Annual Meeting on Good Friday, March 31, at Ullet Road Church, Liverpool. He was Federation Treasurer from 1949 to 1959, and has been a member of the General Committee for twelve years. During that time he has rendered extremely valuable service in connection with the Federation and Homes finances, and with the revision of the terms of the Trusts of the Homes Centre at Great Hucklow which it is hoped will soon be approved. Once again the N.S.S.F. honours a past officer. Mr. Hibbert, who spends his days as an officer in an Insurance Company, is married with two daughters, and lives in Audenshaw, Manchester. He devotes a good deal of his spare time to Richmond Hill Unitarian Church, Ashton-under-Lyne, where for nearly fourteen years he has applied his careful attention to detail and orderliness to the office of Sunday School Secretary. Brought up from boyhood at Richmond Hill, he became a Sunday School teacher at an early age, and is the School's regular pianist. He is also vice-chairman of the congregation.

While the outgoing President, the Rev. F. M. Ryde, M.A., of Bank Street Chapel, Bury, (himself a past Secretary of the Federation) hands over to Mr. Hibbert, the present Federation Secretary, the Rev. Sydney H. Knight, of Stand will retire, and is nominated for election as President-elect, to succeed Mr. Hibbert in 1962.

The new Federation Secretary nominated for the coming year has been assistant for the past twelve months. He is Mr. Alan Curren of Horwich, a past National President of the U.Y.P.L., a copy-taster on the staff of a Bolton evening newspaper, an active Church and Sunday School worker, a member of the R.E.Y.D. Committee, and an enthusiastic supporter of Hucklow. He and his wife, Vina, are well known in Unitarian Youth circles.

The speaker at the evening meeting is the Rev. R. G. Kimball, S.T.B., who trained for the American Unitarian ministry, but is for a period settled at Stockport Unitarian Church. His talk, entitled "Lift up their Hearts," which will be concerned with new trends in American religious education, should prove interesting, for Mr. Kimball has the double advantage of knowing the American Unitarian world from the inside, and of knowing something of English Unitarian congregational life from direct personal experience.

HUMANITY SPEAKS

Where God is in the very solitude
There humanity speaks,
There on the high altitude
The conscience salve the bleak
Untempered sense of realism,
On the high of highest peaks,
Religion does but teach
To close the material breach.
Where God is the very altitude,
There humanity speaks
Because nothing is out of fashion
Love is never a passion
Nothing has a date
Therefore there is no hate
Man gives a helping hand
Where God is the pasture land
There on the high of highest peaks
Humanity speaks.

ALICE M. RUSHLING.

ANGLICANS HAVE MUCH TO LEARN

"As an Anglican I felt that my church had much to learn from the Unitarians."

Lord Altrincham after preaching at Strand Unitarian Church.

"Felt sorry for his reverence last Sunday when he asked a Church member to sign the Visitor's Book."

WHOSE FAULT WAS IT?

by Norman Blake

If Abraham had had a trifle more obstinacy and a trifle less affection for his son, young Isaac would have been a gonner and Abraham's succession have gone to some one of his many second-rate sons.

One must agree that his mother was foolish to let the two of them mooch off like that. It is absurb to argue that a woman could do nothing, she made Abraham send Hagar and Ishmael packing pretty quick, and if she had tongue-lashed the old man a bit, he would probably have found reason to postpone this mysterious journey and would perhaps have forgotten it altogether.

Then there were the young men, young men not old cronies, young men who would be hoping before long for promotion under Isaac. These two let the old "so-and-so" pack a cwt. of fuel on Isaac's back and stalk off with a butcher's knife and a "lighter." And the boy's name was Isaac, which means "laughter." Next time you carry in Mum's boiler fuel, reflect how much fuel would have been needed for a sacrificial fire.

Come to think of it, it was carrying the claims of filial devotion a bit far to stagger for miles up a mountain and then allow oneself to be trussed up for killing: No it was a thoroughly bad show and should never have been allowed to go the length it did. All because no one liked to interfere. God never called, Abraham full of self-righteousness tortured himself, but God can always teach us from our mistakes. The ram caught in a thicket by his horns, emaciated, only fit to be put out of its misery, this was the valuable animal selected by God to replace Isaac. I don't expect Abraham ever worried much about sacrifices again because he had discovered that God loved Isaac better than he did.

The same lesson must have got home to Isaac, plus amazement at Abraham's devotion to God, for he knew just how much he meant to his father. Have you ever noticed that it is his father's faith that means most to a boy. Remember that boys, if God is part of your laughter and adventure as well as in your work and your sorrows your sons will worship with you and after you. For all of us it poses the problem of sadism with a screw loose. For the Christian the solution can never be just a report to the proper authority, the papers are full of evil things that happen in the meantime. We can only charge ourselves with the dynamic "perfect love casteth out fear." The more we are impelled to suffer (which may mean personal risk but more often feeling a perfect fool) the nearer we are to the steps of the Master.

O DANCING AT CROSS STREET CHAPEL

Ninety-six people voted out of a ossible one hundred-and-ten when embers of Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, were asked to say hether they were in favour of ancing being permitted in the new dual purpose" chapel.

Only twenty-eight were in favour.

The chapel committee has accepted he democratic vote, but recorded hat "it was unanimously felt that his must not be taken in any way s showing disapproval of the young eople's desire to find social enjoyment in their own way in association with their chapel, and it was deeply felt that we must consider how we can help them to gain that enjoyment."

A reliable authority says that the young people are not letting the matter rest.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Home Churches

The Young Men's Class at NEWCHURCH is flourishing and a special meeting has been called for the end of February to consider ways and means whereby members of the class can take an even more active part in the life and work of the church.

Proceeds of the St. Valentine's Day Social at GATEACRE organised by the Women's League were for the "War on Want."

Miss Elsie Davies has resigned as secretary of HIGHLAND PLACE, South Wales, Women's League, after having held that office since 1928. The recent centenary services at the chapel are reported as having been inspiring. Full reports and a review of the booklet "A city set upon a Hill" appeared in the local Press.

From February 12th Sunday School started again at STOCKPORT. It will follow the rapidly growing practice of meeting at the same time as the morning service.

At a recent meeting of the Manchester Unitarian Student's Society the brains of three well known and influential Manchester Unitarians were exercised by an audience of students which included a medical student, a town and country planner and a housewife who is training to be a teacher. To be on the panel the society invited Principal Kenworthy, of the Unitarian College, Mr. Varley, of Cross Street Chapel, a lecturer in biochemistry in the University of Manchester, and Miss Elisabeth Plummer, a student of librarianship. Sex, Morality and American Unitarianism are among the topics that the society has discussed since its formation in October. It is only a small group but appears to be

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by **S. P. WHITEHOUSE, M.A., B.Litt.**

Essex Hall Lecture, 1960

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The Lindsey Press,
Essex Hall,
1/6, Essex Street, Strand,
London W.C.2.

growing week by week. The society meets in the meeting room at Cross Street Chapel on Wednesday evenings at 7.30 p.m. and it aims to have short introductory speeches followed by lively discussion among the students.

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An extract from the "Killinchy Messenger," December, 1960: (the minister is the Right Rev. H. William Dyer).

"An experiment in the efficiency of Prayer. Under the instructions of the painter the church doors are to be left open every day to preserve the paint. As the duty falls upon the minister, he formulated a scheme by which he holds a short devotional period in one seat each day, fervently remembering the occupants of the seat in the presence of God, and pleading for a greater loyalty to church and worship. If you have felt a strange intuition or awareness, you now know the reason—you are being remembered at the Throne of Grace—It is sincerely hoped that this remembrance will help you in your daily activities."

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